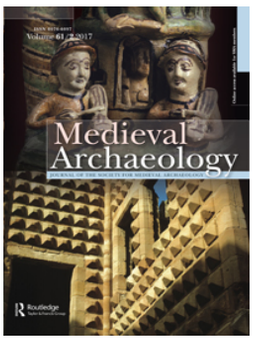
Religious transformations in the Middle Ages: towards a new archaeological agenda



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Religious Transformations in the Middle Ages: Towards a New Archaeological Agenda

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UNDERSTANDING RELIGIOUS CHANGE between the collapse of the Roman Empire and the Reformation forms one of the cornerstones of medieval archaeology, but has been riven by period, denominational, and geographical divisions. This paper lays the groundwork for a fundamental rethink of archaeological approaches to medieval religions, by adopting an holistic framework that places Christian, pagan, Islamic and Jewish case studies of religious transformation in a long-term, cross-cultural perspective. Focused around the analytical themes of 'hybridity and resilience' and 'tempo and trajectories', our approach shifts attention away from the singularities of national narratives of religious conversion, towards a deeper understanding of how religious beliefs, practices and identity were renegotiated by medieval people in their daily lives.

INTRODUCTION

Christianisation is regarded as a defining feature of 'Europeanisation', and the study of religion has influenced the conceptualisation of societal change across the medieval period. Yet scholarship on this fundamental aspect of medieval life remains fragmented and riven by national and chronological divisions. This paper offers insights from a selection of case studies under the two themes of 'hybridity and resilience' and 'tempo and trajectories', emerging from an international workshop held at the University of Reading in May 2015. Our aim is to advance an understanding of medieval religious transformations by taking a comparative, thematic approach, to cross-cut traditional chronological, geographical and denominational

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boundaries. This contribution sets aside two persistent dichotomies which have constrained the previous study of medieval religion and belief: the simplistic assumption that medieval life was neatly separated into 'religious' versus 'secular' domains; and that the principal driver for religious transformation was a clash between 'orthodox' versus 'heterodox' religious identities. In breaking down these divisions, this paper seeks to lay the foundations for a more holistic, interpretive framework — one which exploits archaeology's unique capability to reveal how religion was experienced, expressed and negotiated by medieval people in their daily lives, as an indivisible component of personhood and social identity.

RELIGION AND THE STUDY OF MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

In the last 15 years, there have been significant developments in our understanding of religious transformations in medieval Europe, partly due to the increasing adoption of post-processualism within medieval archaeology, and also resulting from comparative, inter-regional studies, which have started to dissolve some of the geographical singularities promoted in nationalist histories. Pre-Christian religions are increasingly defined by their profound spatial, temporal and social variation.[10] The singularity of medieval Christianity has been challenged, and the notion that Christianity was itself undergoing transformation at varying social levels has been emphasised.[11] The study of religious heterodoxy, from Carlo Ginzburg's microhistories of divergent Christian cosmologies[12] to R I Moore's revised narrative of religious dissent in western Europe,[13] has remained at the cutting edge of medieval and early modern historical studies.[14] Crusading studies have also pushed our understanding of religious transformations at the frontiers of Europe, where holy war and associated colonisation could be twinned with missionary activity. Even at the zenith of papal power during the reign of Innocent III (c 1198–1216), there was no consistent supra-regional definition of *Christianitas*.[15]

From an archaeological perspective, the material indicators of religious transformations — the location and character of cult sites, traces of devotional practices and ideologically charged signifiers such as diet, or the ritual killing and deposition of animals — have traditionally been understood as a cumulative sequence leading to a desired outcome: the process of Christianisation or in some regions Islamisation. The coherent observance of Christianity's 'eschatological expectations',[16] however, is complicated by the recognition of variability in the creation of Christian identity, particularly brought to the fore in examinations of cemetery evidence in the context of both early and later medieval burial customs.[17] This new emphasis on cemeteries as barometers of religious change has not resulted in the abandonment of earlier critiques of equating burials with religious allegiance. Indeed, it is questionable whether it is even possible to untangle religion from expressions of social identity such as status, gender and ethnicity.[18] At the same time, the fundamental connection

[10] Andrén et al 2006; Carver et al 2010.
[11] Eg Carver 2003b.
[12] Ginzburg 1976.
[13] Moore 2012.
[14] Ginsburg 1976; Moore 2012.
[15] Geelhaar 2015.
[16] Urbańczyk 2010, 95.
[17] Thompson 2004, 38–46; Gilchrist and Sloane 2005.
[18] Eg Sayer 2009.

between burial customs and contrasting cosmological understandings of death is a theme that connects the study of multi-faith societies in medieval Europe.[19] Challenges to the traditional paradigm, marked by the 2001 Conversion Conference published as *The Cross Goes North*,[20] an archaeological response to Richard Fletcher's historical narrative of the conversion to Christianity in Europe,[21] shifted the focus from a top down imposition of the new religion to local acceptance and reconfiguration. This resulted in emphasis on the regional variability most clearly visible in material culture and practices.[22] Nonetheless, the relationship between religious conversion, royal power and medieval state formation has endured as a theme in the scholarship.[23]

The scholarly tendency to periodise has segregated the archaeological study of religious transformation and limited our understanding of long-term change. In north-western Europe, the 'conversion period' maps onto the 'early medieval period' or the 'Viking Age'. In Scandinavia and the eastern Baltic, the proliferation of Christianity is synonymous with the even more profound transition from prehistory to history, which in turn, is frequently linked to the process of 'Europeanisation'.[24] This has been largely defined by both archaeologists and historians as a process of conversion and with the widespread scholarly adoption of derogatory labels such as 'pagan' and 'heathen', this has resulted in essentialist dichotomies between pre-Christian and Christian societies, with corresponding material traces.[25] The term 'pagan' nonetheless remains useful for broadly characterising those religious systems encountered and transformed by Christians. This essentialist paradigm, ultimately influenced by medieval Christian conceptualisations of the pagan 'other', resulted in the popularisation of the term 'syncretism' — the variable mixing of two or more opposing religious systems with corresponding material correlates,[26] even resulting in an interpretation of parallel religious systems existing within the same society.[27] The 'Christian period', synonymous with the High and Late Middle Ages, has been studied separately, and work on the Reformation remains almost completely segregated.[28] In other parts of Europe, such as Iberia and the eastern Baltic, the persistence of multi-faith societies into the 15th century has defined the Middle Ages as a period of ongoing religious transformation. Here, the influence of postcolonial theory within the study of frontier societies, has resulted in the use of terms such as 'indigenous' to refer to cultures encountered and transformed by Christian migrants. Responses to religious transformation can be readily situated within the context of colonisation, coexistence, confrontation and resilience.

In contrast to the study of religious transformation in 'conversion period' northern Europe, archaeological studies of medieval heterodoxy have been largely descriptive, focusing on Jewish communities and multi-faith communities in Iberia and the Latin East. Caught up in the essentialist paradigm, archaeology has presented these communities as static rather than dynamic. However, one of the propositions of this paper is that the process of religious transformation should be regarded as a constant current from the post-Roman period through

[19] Urbańczyk 2010, 94.
[20] Carver 2003a.
[21] Fletcher 1997.
[22] Carver 2003b.
[23] Berend 2007.
[24] Blomkvist 2004.
[25] Kilbride 2001.
[26] Leopold and Jensen 2004.
[27] Valk 2004.
[28] Gaimster and Gilchrist 2003; King and Sayer 2011.

to the Reformation and beyond. The material record provides an underused resource for scrutinising these transformations, which can reveal both rapid and protracted shifts that do not readily synchronise with recorded doctrinal changes. They offer complementary insights into the devotional practices of communities, households and individuals over space and time. More nuanced diachronic perspectives have been complemented by increasing comparative, interregional studies, moving away from the geographical singularities promoted in nationalist histories. This tendency, already evident in the 1990s,[29] is set to continue within the framework of Europe-wide research programmes, exhibitions and networks.[30] In 2013, a special issue of *World Archaeology* edited by Julia Shaw focused on the 'Archaeology of Religious Change'. The majority of contributions were concerned with the 'long Middle Ages', including the impact of the Reformation,[31] and the Spanish Conquest of Central America.[32] This has been paralleled in networks focusing on historical sources. Ira Katznelson and Miri Rubin's (2014) edited volume addressed issues of gender, identity, borders, sacred space and time, and also spanned the 'long Middle Ages'.[33]

DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS

This paper represents the outcome of a workshop convened to draw together a series of Christian, pagan, Islamic and Jewish case studies from across Europe to offer comparative insights into processes of religious transformation as a unifying aspect of medieval society. Although the six speakers were asked to address a specific set of questions to align discussion, the workshop was designed as an experiment in open thinking: what types of connections, synergies and thematic correspondences might emerge by bringing case studies of medieval religious transformation drawn from widely differing periods and cultural contexts into reflexive dialogue? Ultimately, two cross-cutting themes crystallised from the workshop — 'hybridity and resilience' and 'tempo and trajectories' — which together form the structural framework for this paper.

Before going on to examine these themes in greater detail, we will first clarify some of the definitions and concepts which frame our approach and its relationship to previous literature. Following Timothy Insoll,[34] we argue for an holistic conception of religion that seeks to replace the essentialist dichotomy between sacred and profane with an understanding of how medieval belief was constituted as an essential part 'of daily life, inextricably bound up with other aspects of existence'.[35] Our approach is grounded in the instrumentalist critique of cultural traditions and a rejection of the conception of a pristine, primordial state of religion;[36] rather, religious beliefs and practices constantly evolve and transform through interaction with each other and as part of wider cultural encounters and dialogues.[37] We also distance ourselves from the view that the indigenisation of world religions in the medieval world, conceived, for example, as the Germanisation of Christianity,[38] should be conceptualised

[29] Eg Urbańczyk 1997.
[30] Eg Stiegemann et al 2013.
[31] Perring 2013.
[32] Graham et al 2013.
[33] Katznelson and Rubin 2014.
[34] Insoll 2001; 2004, 6–23.
[35] Price 2008, 145; see also Meier and Tillessen 2014.
[36] Hobsbawn and Ranger 1983.
[37] Shaw 2013, 4–5.
[38] Russell 1994.

as a dynamic between animistic verses doctrinal 'modes of religiosity', the former rooted in externalised rituals (praxis) and the latter in internalised convictions of personal faith based on scriptural authority.[39] As Anette Lindberg has shown, this approach both underplays the importance of ritual actions within Judo-Christian/Islamic religions and minimises the importance of belief systems and symbolic conceptions in pre-Christian contexts.[40]

The mechanics of how religions interact with each other has spurred an extensive literature across several fields of the social sciences. Multiple competing concepts and definitions have emerged within sociology and social anthropology and the picture becomes yet more complex, variegated (and in some cases muddied) when the paradigms concerned are translated into archaeological discourse.[41] For reasons explained below, we argue that the post-colonial formulation of hybridity offers the most powerful, flexible and nuanced tool for divulging the complex mechanics of religious transformation which permeated the medieval world. Here we briefly evaluate the alternative models before exploring the concept of hybridity in greater detail.

Extensively applied and critiqued in studies of Roman religion, syncretism has found favour with some medievalists as a way of explaining apparent dualisms in religious belief.[42] This mode of explanation has been applied in various medieval contexts, from Anglo-Saxon textual references to the syncretic worship of pagan idols alongside a Christian God,[43] through to the dual iconography of Viking-Age sculpture,[44] and to describe experiences of religion in the eastern Baltic after the crusades.[45] The emphasis given in these studies is on the blending of traditions, classically conceived in the Germanic/Scandinavian cultural sphere as comingling of 'animistic' (pre-Christian) versus 'doctrinal' (Christian) religions.[46] The term 'acculturation' (and comparable labels, eg 'cultural osmosis') has also been invoked in a medieval context with a particular focus on the construction of bottom-up narratives of religious transformation emphasising extended periods of interaction and accommodation between belief systems. In a Scandinavian milieu this process has been conceived as 'a gradual levelling in the cognitive underpinning of paganism and Christianity' which created conditions conducive to top-down mass proselytisation driven by kings and continental missions.[47]

While syncretism and acculturation have separate and divergent sociological and anthropological underpinnings, we believe that they share weaknesses that undermine their explanatory utility for a study of medieval religious transformations. The fundamental problematic shared by both models is that they promote a passive view of religious interaction that fails to capture the dynamics of ritual action — a sphere of human agency 'in which people continually and actively create and negotiate cultural conceptions and their social worlds', through the mediating influence of practice, performance and embodiment.[48]

Taken in its broadest sense, post-colonial theory is concerned with the impact of external authorities on subjugated societies. Applied to contexts of medieval religious transformation, a post-colonial perspective lays emphasis on local responses to the top-down dissemination of Christianity through processes of human agency and cultural negotiation.

[39] Eg Dunn 2010.
[40] Lindberg 2009, 104–9.
[41] Clack 2011.
[42] Webster 1997; Mattingly 2007.
[43] Eg Yorke 2003.
[44] Jesch 2015, 119–62.
[45] Eg Valk 2003.
[46] Eg Russell 1994; Cusack 1998; Dunn 2010.
[47] Garipzanov 2014, 4.
[48] Lindberg 2009, 88.

Used critically and with due regard to context, post-colonial readings of hybridity offer a means of overcoming the conceptual shortcomings of syncretism and acculturation which we identify in our evaluation. At its core, as formulated in the writings of Homi Bhabha,[49] hybridity is grounded in a sociological critique of the colonial encounter as a passive, depoliticised joining of cultures, expressed in such neutral terminology as 'fusion', 'assimilation' and 'culture change'. In contrast, hybridity articulates an active view of translation and counter-translation between cultures via the concept of 'third space' — a dynamically negotiated arena which simultaneously replaces and references the cultural domains from which it is born.[50] Extended to include the 'uncanny' — the mental state that produces a division and doubling of experience characteristic among exiled and migrant cultures — post-colonial theorisations of hybridity offer a vehicle for exploring how people actively negotiate religious transformation at a psychological level when moving towards the achievement of specific goals.[51]

Archaeological commentators have warned that in applications to the remote past, hybridity may all too easily become stripped of its post-colonial meaning, situated in discourses of power, to emerge as little more than a neutral synonym for cultural fusion.[52] To counteract this tendency, archaeologists need to resist the temptation to view hybridity as a categorisation or 'state of being', and focus attention on process, namely: 'social practice associated with moments or periods of transformation, change and creativity at the hands of social agents'.[53] Enjoying access to comparatively good chronological frameworks, and a combination of sources of evidence, medieval archaeologists are well placed to contribute a multiscalar chronological perspective on the process of religious transformation grounded in social and cultural contexts.[54] As explored under our thematic sub-heading 'Tempo and Trajectories', contrary to missionary narratives which emphasise rapid conversions, the tempo of change as evident from material practices can be much more variable, both spatially and socially. By adopting a 'deep time' perspective, it is possible to begin to separate continuities from discontinuities, re-imaginings and novel cultural phenomena.[55] Social agency and inequalities of power are also brought to the fore by each of the case studies. Together they provide complementary perspectives on political conquest, colonisation and the expansion of new hegemonies as catalysts for the renegotiation of religious belief and identity. As amply illustrated in relation to theorisations of diaspora, medieval archaeology has much to offer in terms of deepening the chronological parameters of post-colonial discourse and harnessing the remote past as a mirror on contemporary and recent global concerns.[56]

Having surveyed the conceptual terrain behind our approach, it is now possible to turn a detailed spotlight on five case studies of medieval transformation. Each of these sections commences with a brief explanation designed to bridge the distance between the general theoretical concepts presented above and the cultural and chronological specificities relating to our case studies: Prussia in the age of the Baltic Crusades, the Islamic conquest of Iberia, Christianisation in Anglo-Saxon England and late antique Rome, and the later medieval Jewry of Central Europe.

[49] Bhabha 1994.
[50] Bhabha 1996.
[51] Äikäs and Salmi 2013.
[52] Stockhammer 2012; Sillman 2015.
[53] Sillman 2015, 286.
[54] Gerrard 2003, 229.
[55] Mitchell et al 2010.
[56] Eg Jesch 2015.

HYBRIDITY AND RESILIENCE

Where religious transformation was imposed by force, usually accompanying regime change following a military conquest, the process was far more complex and protracted than suggested by the victors' narratives. From the late 11th century these conquests were framed by a common ideology of holy war — crusading — but the encounters between the conquerors and conquered varied across and within regions. This will be demonstrated by a comparison between two European frontiers: Prussia and Iberia. Here, it is important to recall that religion was fused with other identities: political, social, gendered and economic. As a result, religious transformation was bound up with broader social changes defined as 'Europeanisation', and in both Prussia and Iberia as 'feudalisation'. Local case studies highlight variability within these overarching cultural changes, and challenge us to question the image of monolithic homogeneity promoted by the dominant religious authorities. These transformations can be better understood through the related concepts of hybridity and resilience. Here, the term hybridity can be usefully applied to understand how pre-existing cultural differences were reconfigured to shape new societies with their own distinctive features;[57] Al-Andalus was no more a replica of North African caliphates than Prussia was a replica of the Holy Roman Empire. Resilience, referring to the amount of change a system can undergo while retaining its structure, is a useful measure of the ability of both colonists and colonised to adapt to the new social realities of the conquests.[58] Hybridity can therefore be understood as an expression of resilience, with neither group remaining unchanged.

PRUSSIA

The crusades against tribal societies in the region known as Prussia (1230–1283) saw the imposition of militarised Christian theocracies recruited from the Holy Roman Empire — the Teutonic Order and bishops. However, the dissemination of Christianity within the conquered territories was erratic, and indigenous religious practices were maintained in some areas beyond the period of theocratic rule. The narratives of the crusades in the eastern Baltic (both Livonia and Prussia) promoted an essentialist dichotomy between Christians and pagans into the first half of the 14th century. The category of 'neophytes', used to define a transitional stage in the religious transformation of the indigenous population, can also be linked to the deliberate maintenance of a distinctive social identity.[59] Across the conquered territories, changes in funerary rites provide the most detailed and comparative index of religious transformation, especially in rural areas where indigenous communities continued to use and establish cemeteries away from churches.

This is strikingly visible in the cessation of ritual animal deposits in cemeteries, particularly the live burial of horses. This rite, associated primarily with the Prussians and Lithuanians, reinforced political status with the cosmological role of the horse. The centralisation of authority in Lithuania parallels the association of this ritual with powerful chieftains and their military retinues, and horse sacrifices ultimately became linked with the identity of the grand dukes.[60] While the horse continued to feature as a ritual animal in 14th-century Lithuania, the post-crusade phase of eastern Prussian cemeteries saw the abandonment of horse deposits (Fig 1). Instead, the continued use of equestrian equipment can be interpreted

[57] Liebmann 2015, 326.
[58] Redman and Kinzig 2003.
[59] Kala 2009.
[60] Bertašius 2006.

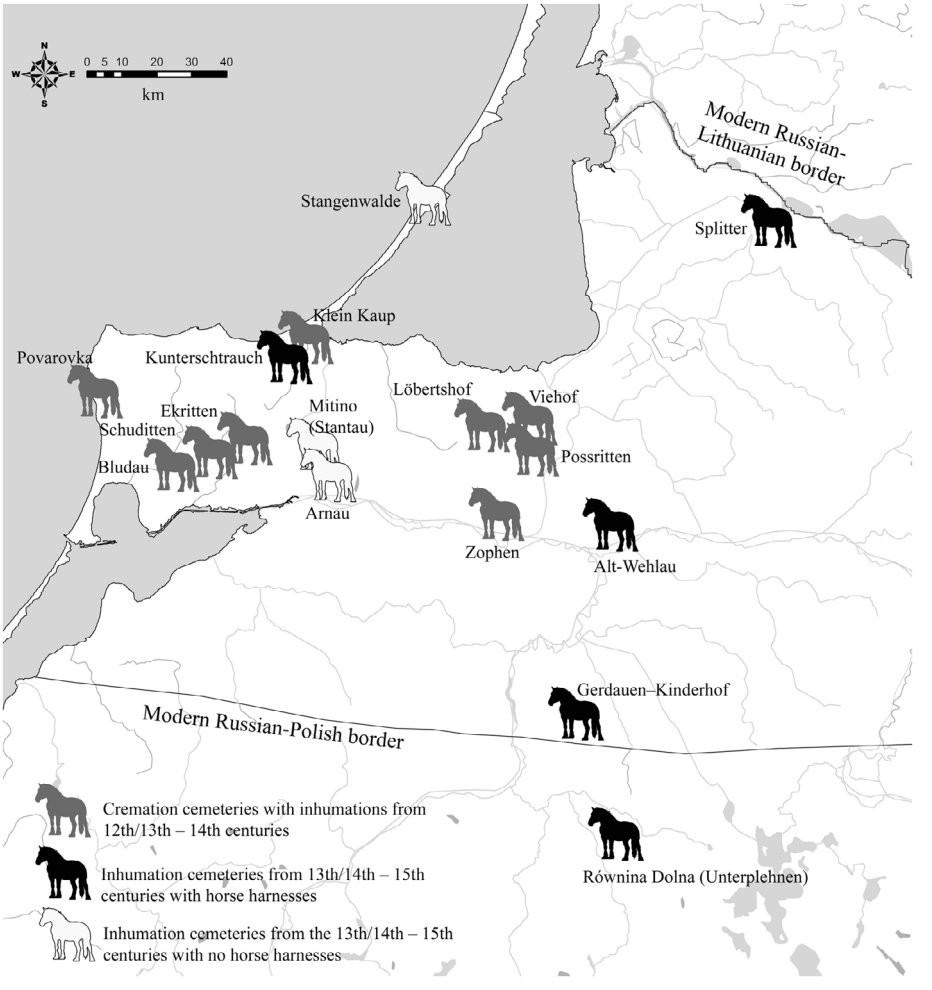

FIG 1
Archaeologically known cemeteries with inhumations, weapons and horse harnesses from the 12th/13th–15th centuries in Prussia. Horse deposits are found only in pre-crusade cemeteries dating to the 12th and up to the first half of the 13th century. *After Shiroukhov 2012, fig 15.*

as proxies for horses;[61] a similar trend is evident in conversion-period Anglo-Saxon England.[62] During the crusading period in Prussia, the early Christian argument against animal sacrifice was clearly invoked; evident from the Treaty of Christburg (1249) which forbade cremation, 'pagan burials', the deposition of horses and valuables in graves, as well as the participation of ritual specialists at the graveside.[63] This treaty also defined Christian cemeteries as proper places of burial.[64] However, written sources refer to the continued practice of animal sacrifice at the household level lasting into the post-medieval period. Since public animal sacrifice

[61] Shiroukhov 2012.
[62] Fern 2007.
[63] Ullucci 2011.
[64] Patze 1958.

at cemeteries had been politicised, it is not surprising these acts became restricted to the domestic sphere. At the same time, the political resonance of such rites cannot be separated from their religious meanings.

Standardised Christian eschatology is evident within newly founded towns, and where local people settled in these newly established towns, there is evidence for relative homogeneity in burial praxis — an acceptance of the new eschatology.[65] Indigenous Prussians who moved to towns became archaeologically indivisible from the rest of the urban population. In contrast, where indigenous rural cemeteries continued to be used, they maintained a visible link to their pre-Christian ancestry in terms of location. Where local elites survived, they maintained elements of past customs embedded in and perpetuating pre-crusade social memory. In Prussia, while there is no clear evidence for the continued use of strongholds by indigenous communities in the post-crusade period, elements of the indigenous nobility were redefined as vassals.[66] In the absence of excavated indigenous rural settlements, they are most visible archaeologically in burial customs, where pre-crusade social identities continued to be emphasised.

At Równina Dolna (Germany, Unter Plehen; Warmia, Poland), the practice of sacrificing horses in the migration period had been abandoned long before the crusades, and from the 13th–15th century inhumation burials contained typical signifiers of status in the form of weapons, equestrian equipment and native dress accessories, as well as amulets with bear teeth set in bronze fittings. This was alongside necklaces incorporating the Order's coins with the inscription 'Ave Maria', as well as lead crosses. There was also evidence for pits filled with charcoal and ash, perhaps used for cooking or for other ceremonial purposes.[67] The largest number of such pits has been excavated at the indigenous Sambian cemetery at Alt-Wehlau (near Znamensk, Russian Kaliningrad Oblast), where 40% of burials dating to the 13th and 14th centuries were associated with pits containing charcoal, bird bones and wheel-thrown ceramics.[68] Równina Dolna was associated with an indigenous settlement, as well as a small castle built by the Teutonic Order, and was located c 15 km north-east of the procurator's castle at Rastenburg (Kętrzyn, Poland). It is therefore clear that local indigenous funerary practices (which included the deposition of valuables condemned in 1249) and the reinforcement of local elite identities were tolerated by the theocracy. To the south, a cemetery excavated at Bezławki (Bäslack, Germany) predates the documented foundation of a colonising settlement in 1371. Here, inhumations dating from the mid-14th century were aligned E/W and associated with minimal gravegoods, and a distinctive absence of hybrid amuletic artefacts and charcoal/ash pits.[69] The population in the cemetery, also living close to a Teutonic Order stronghold, has been interpreted as indigenous, but the contrast with Równina Dolna suggests that expressions of cultural resilience were promoted and reinforced by local elites. As the region became increasingly colonised from the mid-14th century by Christian migrants, accompanied by further church foundations, the religious landscape changed; with Christianity proliferating through colonisation. In some parts of eastern Prussia, there is evidence for continued use of indigenous cemeteries; Alt-Wehlau continued to function into the 17th century, although burial rites had changed substantially.

Responses to these practices varied extensively, with relatively few examples of direct intervention. The construction of a church in c 1361 within the cemetery at Alt-Wehlau,

[65] Valk 2004.
[66] Pluskowski 2012, 96–7.
[67] Odoj 1956.
[68] Voluev 1999.
[69] Koperkiewicz 2011.

destroying earlier graves in the process, was an exceptional response.[70] There were clearly varying degrees of tolerance which depended upon local circumstances and highly specific relationships between individual convents, officials and their subjects.[71] This would explain why some indigenous cemeteries were designated as the abodes of demons, and why the synods of Samland and Riga complained about pagan burials in the wilderness, while the Teutonic Order's convent at Goldingen (Kuldīga, Latvia) in Curonia tolerated public cremation burials and the use of sacred woods, even in the 15th century.[72] The persistence of such practices appears to have mapped onto the maintenance of local power structures, reinforcing the entanglement between religion and other forms of identity.

The conversion of Prussia was therefore a protracted process throughout the period of the Teutonic Order's rule, and it remained incomplete after the secularisation of the Order in 1525. The evidence from cemeteries and written accounts needs to be complemented by adequate excavations of domestic contexts within indigenous rural settlements occupied from the 13th to 17th century. However, it is clear that cemeteries had important cultic functions in the pre-crusade period which were maintained by indigenous communities under the rule of a militarised Christian theocracy.[73] This suggests a degree of resilience, within which ethnic and religious identities were interlinked. The gradual erosion of the Prussian language and customs, disappearing in the 17th century, paralleled the eventual abandonment of pre-Christian and hybridised practices.

IBERIA

The Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in AD 711 saw the introduction of a new religious system accompanied by ritual practices, infrastructure for worship, and the proliferation of Arabic as a linguistic and cultural indicator, alongside new forms of housing and agrarian regimes based on irrigation and exotic crops.[74] Religious identities were initially polarised, and this is most evident in cemeteries. Christian or so-called Mozarabic communities survived mainly in towns.[75] Excavations at the newly created Islamic city of Madīnat Ilbīra (Granada), link the Mozarabic community with the Christian burial rites evident in cemeteries situated within a segregated district. These served an elite class who were spiritually led by a bishop, attested in a Latin inscription dated to the end of the 10th century.[76] Simultaneously, the politicisation of religious identity is highlighted during the rebellion against the central government in Córdoba led by Ibn Hafsūn within the south of Iberia.[77] Hafsūn, originally a Muslim, established a settlement called Bobastro, founded a church and was buried alongside his followers with Christian rites.[78]

The Islamic burials from the earliest chronological phase of Al-Andalus also suggest a regionally variable and gradual process of transformation.[79] In Pamplona (Navarra), a large cemetery with 175 individuals, including men, women and children, has been dated to the start of the 8th century.[80] Some skeletons displayed signs of battle trauma, some graves

[70] Voluev 1999.
[71] Jonuks 2007, 28.
[72] Švābe 1938, 182–3.
[73] See also Szczepański 2016.
[74] Gutiérrez Lloret 2007; Malpica Cuello 2012.
[75] Azuar 2015.
[76] Malpica Cuello 2011.
[77] Acién 1994.
[78] Martínez-Enamorado 2004.
[79] Bulliet 1979.
[80] De Miguel Ibáñez 2012.

contained rings with Arabic inscriptions and some skulls had filed teeth — a characteristic of Berber populations. DNA analysis confirmed the presence of entire Muslim families here, who originated from North Africa. In contrast, the mtDNA of all forty individuals uncovered at El Soto (Madrid), a cemetery used between the 7th–9th centuries, belonged to generations of the same family group.[81] Five graves, reused during the first two centuries, contained 12 individuals in supine positions with gravegoods; burials typical of the Visigothic period. The remaining graves were single inhumations in a right lateral position with the head to the SSE, typical of Muslim burials. This is suggestive of religious change within the same family, in contrast to Pamplona. At the same time as Muslim burial rites began to be employed, Christian graves, dug into rock, remained an active practice, and lasted until the end of the Early Middle Ages in different regions of Al-Andalus.[82] The classical 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' views of the process of religious transformation are not very useful, and Islamisation is better understood as a regionally and temporally variable phenomenon, with examples of conflict alongside conversion and acceptance.[83] This is reinforced by the first coins minted in Al-Andalus, which contained inscriptions in both Latin and Arabic,[84] while degrees of standardisation are also suggested by the absence of pigs in Andalusian contexts, interpreted as reflecting widespread compliance with Islamic precepts.[85]

A further wave of religious transformation is vividly associated with the arrival of the Almohads in the 12th century, whose new ideology left clear material traces. This is exemplified by a shift in the orientation of Iberian mihrabs (a niche in the wall of a mosque that indicates the direction of the Quibla), from 120° to c 155° at sites such as Almería, Mértola, in accordance with mosque-building practices in Morocco which subscribed to an Almohadic view of the direction of Mecca. In rural areas, mosque architecture was far more diverse, reflecting the needs of individual communities and the local environmental context.[86] Local variability is also evident in popular beliefs interpreted as magical practices. Although disconnected from official religion and condemned in legal texts, they engaged with the same cosmology.[87] The representation of three fingers on painted ceramic vessels, an abbreviation of the name of Allah, has been interpreted as a protective device. The same is likely true of inscriptions with the name of Allah, or Berber symbols, such the fish engraved on the walls of mines or quarries, as in Madīnat Ilbīra,[88] and gypsum plaques in Siyasa (Murcia) painted in red and black, representing Fatima's hand, intended to be hung over doorways as talismans.[89] Numerous animal bones with Arabic inscriptions have also been found inside silos, potentially deposited to protect grain.[90]

Change was also prompted by the advancing conquest of Al-Andalus by the northern Christian kingdoms. In the 11th–12th centuries visible efforts to integrate conquered Muslim communities have been linked to the use of bilingual inscriptions in Arabic and Latin, such as on the Romanesque arch of the parish church in Atienza (Fig 2),[91] and on the coins minted by Alfonso VIII.[92] From the 12th century, and especially during the 13th century, Muslims

[81] Vigil-Escalera 2009.
[82] Jiménez et al 2011.
[83] Bulliet 1979.
[84] Balaguer 1976.
[85] Moreno García, 2013.
[86] Eiroa in press.
[87] Azuar 1989, 401.
[88] Malpica Cuello 2011.
[89] Navarro and Jiménez 2002, 65.
[90] Fernández-Ugalde 1997.
[91] García-Contreras 2013.
[92] Francisco Olmos 1998.

FIG 2
Romanesque portal arch of St María del Rey, Atienza, Guadalajara, Spain, with an inscription in Latin and Arabic. *Photograph by A Pluskowski.*

living under Christian rule (Mudejares) had to pay special taxes and reside in specific quarters, or isolated villages in mountainous regions, but their religious practices were permitted.[93] Mosques were often respected and modified largely to function as churches (eg Almería and Mértola). In western Andalusia, especially in Seville and in Córdoba, this led to a hybridised art style — the so-called Mudejar. Later periods of conquest were associated with the conversion of mosques into churches and cathedrals. Following the conquest of Granada in 1492 and the edict of 1502, all Muslims were obliged to convert to Christianity (Moriscos) or face expulsion. During this final period, mosques were not reused, but destroyed and partially used to build new churches, with minarets surviving as converted belfries. Islamic identity persisted despite being forbidden, as evident in the use of Arabic inscriptions in the Muslim quarter in El Barco de Ávila and graffiti inside a house in Granada.[94] This crypto-identity would remain until the Moriscos were systematically expelled from the various Iberian kingdoms between 1609 and 1614.

The persistence of a distinct religious identity under Christian rule is also evident in the case of medieval Iberian Jewish communities. Jewish communities co-existed in both Al-Andalus and Christian kingdoms, showing a high degree of assimilation with regards to their material culture. They were expelled from Al-Andalus after the arrival of the Almohads, and therefore much of the archaeological evidence for medieval Iberian Jews derives from phases of Christian rule. Alongside written sources, only a few categories of archaeological evidence can be clearly related to these communities: synagogues and ritual baths (Mikveh) usually situated in separate walled districts, distinctive ritualistic and funerary artefacts such

[93] Torró 2009.
[94] Jiménez 2016; Barrera Maturana 2008.

as Hannukah oil lamps or tombstones with Hebrew inscriptions,[95] as well as food waste reflecting dietary prohibitions, in particular the absence of pork.[96] Many synagogues and Jewish quarters were abandoned after widespread attacks on Jewries in 1391, and all were abandoned after 1492, when the remaining Jews were expelled by the Catholic monarchs.

Medieval Iberian society was therefore defined by coexistence between contrasting religious groups, with little evidence for composite or merged practices. While Muslims, Christians and Jews lived and worked alongside each other, to each other they were the 'other' — a conceptual separation that was also legally defined.[97] Those who converted from one religion to another were expected to visibly conform to their new identity, and while suppressed identities were maintained in secret or at the fringes of centralised authority, there was no spectrum of religious hybridity. Here, resilience was represented by the persistence of earlier identities, beliefs and practices in the face of persecution, discrimination, and the temporally variable dominance of either Islam or Christianity.

TEMPO AND TRAJECTORIES: THE DYNAMICS OF RELIGIOUS TRANSFORMATIONS

Historical narratives invariably reduce medieval religious transformations into a linear trajectory of events or 'moments' charting the rise and fall of mutually antagonistic orthodoxies.[98] By dissolving the essentialist narratives and paradigms which have guided understandings of medieval conversion, archaeological approaches can help to elucidate the underlying temporal realities and context-specific complexities of religious transformation. Material-culture perspectives offer a particularly powerful tool for examining the temporality of religious transformations. They are sensitive, on the one hand, to the fluid and active behaviours associated with human expressions of belief,[99] and, on the other, to long-term continuities in ritual practice that structured popular and culturally embedded modes of religious expression.[100] Accordingly, archaeological approaches have been influential in deepening awareness of the internal dynamics of undocumented 'pagan' belief systems;[101] mapping periods of religious dialogue and interaction preceding and post-dating documented narratives of conversion;[102] and exploring the intersection between time, periodicity and social memory, expressed in monument reuse and the long-term material narratives of ritual landscapes.[103] Three case studies offer contrasting perspectives on the theme of tempo and trajectory on medieval religious transformations.

THE ANGLO-SAXON CONVERSION

Anglo-Saxon England has provided fertile ground for exploring the temporal dynamics of religious transformation at the disciplinary interface of history and archaeology. The conceptualisation of Christianisation as a series of developmental stages (infiltration versus

[95] Ayaso and Iniesta 2009.
[96] Valenzuela et al 2014.
[97] Glick 1992.
[98] Urbańczyk 1998.
[99] Insoll 2011b, 3.
[100] Stocker and Everson 2003; Gilchrist 2012; 2014, 244–5.
[101] Andrén 2008; Andrén et al 2006; Carver et al 2010; Petts 2011, 73–96; Hedeager 2011.
[102] Eg Carver 2003a; Hoggett 2010, 13–6; Nordeide 2011; Shaw 2013, 5–8.
[103] Eg Bradley 1987; Williams 1997; 2006; Semple 2013.

mission versus assimilation/consolidation), strongly influenced by Scandinavian scholarship,[104] has been particularly influential in encouraging a deeper consideration of the timing and tempo of the process of religious transformation. Many recent studies endorse the view of gradual infiltration and mutual adaption over the traditional picture of rapid change painted by historical narratives. Yet, as we shall see, there remains a considerable diversity of opinion on the overall duration and tempo of the individual stages, especially with regards to grassroots assimilation.

One of the advances made by recent historical scholarship to this debate is to deepen awareness that the 'mission' phase of the Christianisation process had a distinct rhythm and temporal complexity of its own. While the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon royal courts was a relatively rapid process lasting some two to three human generations, the trajectory was far from simple and unidirectional. As Barbara Yorke has shown, in most kingdoms there was a chronological gap of 40–50 years between the earliest royal conversions and the permanent acceptance of the new faith (typically marked by the public proclamation to destroy pagan idols), a period when Christianity coexisted with the practice of traditional religion revived under the political authority of apostate kings.[105] Such historically informed insights serve as a reminder that at the social apex at least, spasmodic, generational shifts in religious affiliation formed part of the temporal fabric of dynastic politics.

Recent years have seen renewed attempts to explain the underlying mechanics of Christianisation in Anglo-Saxon England through the integration of historical and archaeological sources. Works by Marilyn Dunn and Richard Hoggett are deserving of particular comment in the current context.[106] Although differing in approach and geographic focus, both conjure a fast-pace narrative for grass-roots Christianisation whereby changes in burial practice and other archaeological transformations accorded religious significance are calibrated with reference to the historical (and largely 7th-century) account of the foundations of the Anglo-Saxon Church. While commendable for their interdisciplinary ambition, both of these studies display weaknesses in their handling of the chronological nuances of the archaeological evidence which, arguably, betrays longer-term religious adaptation and assimilation strongly embedded in broader processes of socio-economic change.

In their different ways, both of these highlighted works represent a reaction to revisionist studies under whose influence the link between Christian conversion and changing mortuary customs — the decline and eventual cessation of gravegoods, the abandonment of the cremation rite, and the transition to churchyard burial — has been minimalised.[107] While disentangling the causal factors behind such trends will always remain challenging, the availability of expanded archaeological datasets and more precise chronological frameworks means that we can calibrate these constituent transformations with a new level of accuracy. For example, the transition to churchyard burial is now recognised as a much more drawn-out process than hitherto appreciated, the active negotiation of which extended well beyond the 'conversion period' into the 9th and 10th centuries.[108] Meanwhile, significant insights have also emerged from a chronological refinement of the Anglo-Saxon furnished burial rite itself, based upon a major new study integrating high-precision radiocarbon dating and Bayesian

[104] Garipzanov 2014.
[105] Yorke 1999; 2003.
[106] Dunn 2010; Hoggett 2010.
[107] Boddington 1990; Blair 2005, 228–45; Welch 2011.
[108] Gittos 2002; Blair 2005, 241–5, 463–71; Hadley 2007; Astill 2009.

statistical modelling.[109] One of the key conclusions to emerge from this research is that while the 7th century does indeed present evidence for rapid shifts in funerary practice, some of which have the potential to relate to historically documented doctrinal changes, these can only be fully interpreted as part of a longer-term sequence of transformations that unravelled at a generational scale. This realisation encourages a more sophisticated appreciation of the active role played by funerary discourse in the renegotiation of religious identity in which 'the response to Christianity was not to abandon the traditional, but to deploy traditional forms and media in new ways to express the novel'.[110]

A recent burgeoning of excavated Anglo-Saxon rural settlements has opened up new vistas for archaeologists to explore the changing nature and dynamics of religious expression within daily-life contexts, thereby helping to redress the bias of mortuary remains in relevant discourse.[111] This source has brought to light a recurring repertoire of depositional practices analogous to ritual actions on prehistoric and Romano-British settlements, similarly evoking the ritualisation of the domestic/agricultural sphere, grounded in long-standing superstitious beliefs and perceptions of the natural world.[112] As has been observed in relation to rivers and other watery places as a long-term domain of ritual action, many of these recorded behaviours can be shown to persist in the late-Saxon era, demonstrating that they were assimilated and assigned new meanings within a Christian context.[113]

A further insight generated by the increasing availability of settlement archaeology is that prehistoric monument reuse formed a persistent focus of ritual behaviour *across* the Anglo-Saxon settlement spectrum, and was not just a peculiarity of elite/royal residences such as Yeavering, with attendant evidence for chronological and regional variation.[114] While forming an important part of the legitimising strategies of conversion-period social elites claiming supra-regional authority, similar practices can be observed in relation to 5th–6th century settlements, when, as Sarah Semple has argued, the supernatural power of prehistoric monuments was being harnessed by communities to confer power and ancestry at a localised scale.[115]

Advances in understanding have also come through fuller and more systematic archaeological investigation of monastic foundations and other Christian sites in Anglo-Saxon England, resulting in a more informed impression of how centres of religious action accrued meaning over time. When investigated at an appropriate scale, formative Christian sites can be shown to display significant antecedent lives as focal points of power and cult observance within the pre-Christian landscape,[116] offering parallels for similar types of continuity observed in relation to Scandinavian 'landscapes of conversion'.[117] Recent excavations targeting the site of Lyminge — one of an early network of royal monasteries founded in the kingdom of Kent over the course of the 7th century — have provided one of the richest archaeological illustrations of this process from the Anglo-Saxon cultural sphere (Fig 3). Large-scale interventions conducted within the core of the modern-day village surrounding the historic site of the churchyard have uncovered a richly preserved sequence of early medieval

[109] Bayliss and Hines 2013.
[110] Scull 2015, 80.
[111] Petts 2011, 26.
[112] Bradley 2005; Hamerow 2006; Thomas 2016.
[113] Stocker and Everson 2003; Reynolds and Semple 2011.
[114] Crewe 2012.
[115] Semple 2013, 95–99.
[116] Blair 2005, 56–7, 183–91.
[117] Andrén 2013; Nordeide 2011.

FIG 3
Lyminge, showing the pre-Christian royal focus under excavation in the foreground overlooked (upper left) by the site of the Anglo-Saxon monastery and later medieval church. *Photograph by G Thomas © University of Reading.*

settlement archaeology extending from the 5th to 9th centuries documenting the emergence, consolidation and 'monasticisation' of a pre-Christian royal centre.[118] This sequence reveals that the key watershed in Lyminge's development occurred during the 7th century, when the settlement was relocated from the pre-existing site of a timber 'great hall complex', to a new Christian focus sanctified by a continentally-inspired stone church, constructed substantially of reused Roman building material. This reconfiguration of monumental and domestic space was accompanied by other cultural transformations connected with the material practices of daily life, the most notable being a marked shift in dietary preferences towards the consumption of marine fish and fowl.[119] The synchronicity of these transitions suggest that behaviours and practices were actively reconfigured to simultaneously mark a break with the past and to proclaim a new Christianised ideological and political agenda.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A 'CHRISTIAN TOPOGRAPHY' IN ROME

During Late Antiquity the suburbs of the cities of the Roman Empire became increasingly important arenas for political and religious display. Previously — in the Republican and Imperial periods — suburbs were mainly used as residential places, as productive districts, and for funerary purposes. Starting from the 4th century, the suburbs of many late antique cities were transformed by ambitious schemes of monumental investment fuelled by the cult

[118] Thomas and Knox 2012.
[119] Thomas 2013; 2017.

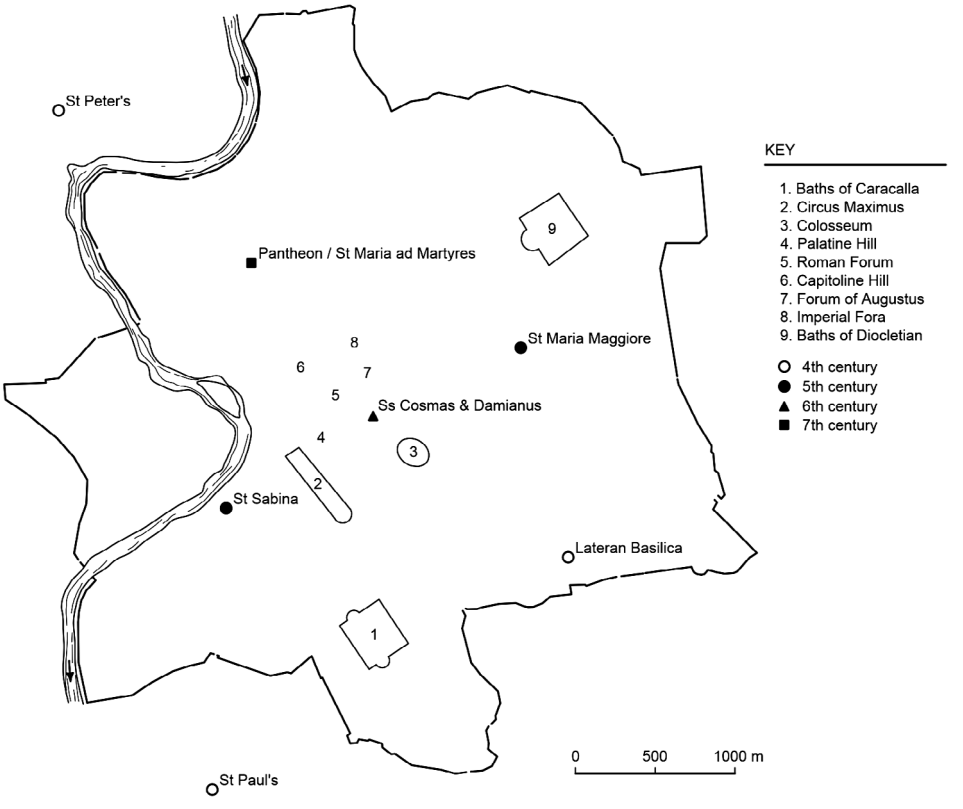

FIG 4
The location of early church sites in relation to the imperial topography of Rome. © *A Augenti.*

of saints, in which the sites of extramural (and frequently subterranean) cemeteries were appropriated by Christian shrines and basilicas. The Christianisation of late antique urban space thus proceeded in a characteristic 'outside in' directional trajectory, which in the case of Rome, took some 200 years to complete (Fig 4).[120]

During the 4th century, the suburbs of the Imperial capital were enriched with very important sanctuaries, above all those of St Peter's and St Paul's, both massive building complexes featuring monumental façades fronted by expansive courtyards. These spacious suburbs offered perfect settings for ambitious schemes of monumental investment proclaiming adherence to the Christian faith as a new source of political and social authority. Yet the Christian monumentalisation of these extramural locations was more than just a consequence of the availability of space; it was a by-product of the fact that the area within the walls was still heavily built up and dominated by the old pagan aristocracy. For example, at the end of the 4th century the senator Tamesius Olympius Augentius had a *mithraeum* erected at his own expense; meanwhile, writing a century later, Pope Gelasius complained to the senator Andromacus that the rite of the *Lupercalia* was still habitually performed in the centre of the

[120] Krautheimer 1980; 1983; Curran 2000; Ensoli and La Rocca 2000; Fiocchi Nicolai 2001; Guidobaldi 2001; Meneghini et al 2004; Spera 2013.

city.[121] This enduring bastion of pagan ideology was to have a strong influence over the siting of the earliest and most important churches within the city's core, as exemplified by the spatial setting of the Lateran Basilica, the Cathedral of Rome, constructed under the patronage of the Emperor Constantine. Located at the southern margins of the walled area, the basilica was built — in a plot owned by the emperor himself — on the ruins of the barracks of the imperial guard, the *Equites Singulares*, purposely destroyed by Constantine in retaliation for the guard's support for the usurper Maxentius at the battle of *Pons Milvius*. Thus, the building of the Cathedral of Rome represents an act of monumental appropriation, designed to convey multiple and subtle political messages. On the one hand, the site of its construction was carefully selected at the edge of the city in order not to antagonise the pagan aristocracy; and on the other, it constituted an enduring political statement of *damnatio memoriae* — an eradication of the memory of those who dared to challenge imperial authority.[122]

It should also be considered that as early as the 4th century the so-called *tituli*, parish churches serving different neighbourhoods — the *tituli Equitii*, *Marci*, *Iulii*, *Anastasiae* — had begun to be constructed within the limits of the walled area. Nonetheless, most of these churches were created by reusing ancient buildings (especially the main halls of the *domus*, ie the private houses), and therefore their monumental impact on the cityscape would have been minimal.[123]

Rome's trajectory entered a decisive new phase in the 5th century, by which time the church administration was starting to establish major basilicas, such as St Maria Maggiore and St Sabina, within the main districts of the walled area.[124] This soon escalated into an intensive phase of intramural church building which was to transform Rome into a Christian monumental city by the beginning of the 6th century. A significant number of the churches from this period can be seen to appropriate former pagan religious sites and temples. Moreover, in certain cases church dedications indicate that the cultic associations of these sites were perpetuated into the Christian present: for example, the church of SS Cosmas and Damianus (memorialising martyred physician brothers), appropriated a building close to the Temple of the Dioscuri, a place where pagan rituals associated with the healing of the sick (*incubatio*) had been practised for centuries. Meanwhile, in the case of the Pantheon (consecrated in the year 608) the original dedication of 'All the Gods' was Christianised to 'St Mary of all the Martyrs'.[125] This evidence implies more than simple continuity in religious space, but continuity in the performance and ritual actions of personal devotion, and hence the ways in which the people of Rome experienced and practised religion in their everyday lives.

Mortuary archaeology provides a complementary perspective on the spatio-temporal dynamics involved with the Christianisation of Rome. The practice of intramural burial, strictly forbidden in ancient times by the 'Law of the Twelve Tables', commenced in Rome during the 5th century, and took off decisively between the 6th and 7th centuries. This entailed a fundamental, perceptual realignment of the relationship between spaces of the living and the dead, and the rise of this practice can be charted through discoveries of early medieval funerary archaeology; discoveries increase in frequency whenever horizons of the appropriate date are encountered through urban excavation. These encapsulate isolated burials at one end of the spectrum, to larger cemeteries at the other, including a

[121] Ward-Perkins 1984, 86–7; Augenti 1996, 43.
[122] Curran 2000, 71–5, 321–3.
[123] Guidobaldi 2001, 42.
[124] Krautheimer 1980.
[125] Augenti 1996, 121; Ward-Perkins 1984, 91.

sizeable funerary zone uncovered near the Colosseum.[126] The mortuary record suggests that this reconfiguration was a gradual process which only gained significant momentum in the 8th century following the widespread translation of relics into urban churches as a stimulus for *ad sanctos* burial.[127] On the other hand, it is nevertheless possible to identify earlier, incipient indications of the transition towards church-administered burial within the urban fabric of Rome. As argued in relation to St Bibiana on the Esquiline Hill, with its nearby cemetery of the 6th century, mortuary processions may have passed through certain churches on the way to neighbouring burial grounds, creating an interface between Christian liturgy and established modes of ritual expression preceding the moment of burial.[128]

Overall, the religious transformation of Rome can be understood as a complex, active and extended process of interaction and negotiation by which Christianity mapped itself onto the inherited sacred topography of the pagan past. The trajectory and tempo of this process was strongly influenced by the strategic manipulation of the past and its entanglement with the political and ideological fabric of the city.

JEWS IN CENTRAL EUROPE

In many senses the experience of the Jews in later medieval western and central Europe followed a path of convergence: growing persecution followed by permanent expulsion. The character and tempo of this narrative, however, varied according to different political contexts. The expulsion of Jews in relation to the politically divided Holy Roman Empire was much more complex and extended than in the case of the centralised states of England, France and Spain: Jews expelled from one German city could often settle in another city, or in adjacent counties or duchies, and later return to the cities from which they were expelled. While it is difficult to chart this phase of religious toleration directly in the archaeological record of these German cities, the post-expulsion legacy and memory of Jewish populations as an active structuring influence on the trajectory of urban and religious life, can be reconstructed through the material narratives of key urban buildings and spaces.

Many medieval Jewish settlements have been archaeologically investigated in recent decades, not least in Germany and Austria.[129] It is very difficult, however, to distinguish Jewish households from their Christian neighbours because they shared a common urban material culture.[130] It is only the ritual traces of Jewish congregations that stand out as clear Jewish remains, above all synagogues, ritual baths (*mikve*, pl *mikva'ot*) and graveyards. In central Europe, medieval synagogues are still preserved in Erfurt, Prague and Worms, whereas synagogues have been excavated in Cologne, Marburg, Speyer, Regensburg and Vienna. Usually, the synagogues consisted of a rectangular hall, sometimes divided into two aisles, sometimes connected with an extra room for women. The ritual baths could be public as well as private. The most monumental public baths were constructed with a staircase going around a central shaft, leading deep down to a pool with shallow water. They are known only from cities in the Rhineland, such as Andernach, Cologne, Friedberg, Speyer and Worms.[131]

[126] Meneghini et al 2004, 103–25.
[127] Cantino Wataghin 1999; Goodson 2010, 197–256; Augenti 2016, 207.
[128] Costambeys 2001; Fiocchi Nicolai 2001, 137.
[129] Harck 2014.
[130] Ibid, 140–216, 411–26.
[131] Harck 2014, 217–342.

In contrast to urban Christian churchyards, Jewish graveyards were mostly placed outside the city walls.[132] Very few medieval Jewish graveyards have been preserved, for example in Frankfurt, Prague and Worms, but Jewish gravestones have been found in secondary contexts. Currently about 3000 Jewish gravestones dating from 1049 to 1500 are known from around 80 cities in central Europe. Most gravestones belong to the period before the middle of the 14th century, when Jews were killed or expelled from most cities in pogroms related to the Black Death. However, many gravestones are also preserved from the period 1380–1500, when Jews were permitted to resettle in some major cities.

In densely populated medieval cities, the complicated encounters between Jews and Christians were often focussed on spaces of performance and issues of purity. According to Jewish customs, Jews were only allowed to walk a certain number of steps during the Sabbath. In order to visit other Jewish families and take part in rituals during Sabbath, Jews tended to live close together around the synagogue in more or less open neighbourhoods. This tendency to confine Jewish settlements was further reinforced by increasingly strict Christian rules concerning Sundays and Christian processions. The presence of Jews in the streets on Sundays, or at processions, was regarded as a threat against the Host and Christians in general. Therefore, several cities issued regulations forcing Jews to close their windows with shutters, to enclose their settlements with walls or simply prohibiting Jews from being outside on Sundays.[133] In Frankfurt, the Jews lived in a ghetto-like settlement totally surrounded by walls from 1462, and in Trier, the main gate from the market street to the Jewish settlement is still preserved.[134]

The growing critique and persecution of Jews eventually meant that they were killed or expelled from many regions of western and central Europe. The character of the expulsion, however, varied according to different political structures. In England, which was a centralised kingdom, Jews were expelled permanently in 1290 from the whole realm. In similar ways, Jews were eventually expelled from France in 1394 and from Spain in 1492. In the politically divided Holy Roman Empire, however, the situation was radically different. Jews expelled from one city could often settle in another city or in adjacent counties or duchies, and later return to the cities from which they were expelled. Therefore, the history of Jewish settlements in German cities is much more of a patchwork, although the general trend was that Jews were eventually killed or permanently expelled from ever more cities. However, in a few isolated cases, such as Frankfurt and Worms, Jewish congregations continued into the 20th century.[135]

The Jewish settlements and ritual buildings were more or less radically transformed after the permanent expulsion of Jews from major German cities. In Erfurt the synagogue was reused as a warehouse after 1349, whereas the synagogue in Frankfurt was rebuilt and used by the town council as a banquet hall after 1349.[136] In contrast, the Jewish settlements were totally demolished and laid out as large market squares in Nuremberg and in Würzburg in 1349 and in Regensburg in 1519. The synagogues in these cities were replaced by large churches, all dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Fig 5).[137] In Vienna the central part of the Jewish settlement was pulled down and laid out as a small square after the expulsion of Jews in 1421. No church was built on the site of the demolished synagogue, but in 1497 a memorial

[132] Harck 2014, 343–94.
[133] Toch 2004.
[134] Wamers and Grossback 2000.
[135] Reuter 2005; Harck 2014, 512.
[136] Ibid, 512–3; 544–7.
[137] Müller 2004; Süss 2010; Codreanu 2004.

FIG 5
Hauptmarkt (Main Square) in Nuremberg, including Frauenkirche (Church of St Mary). The square is the site of the Jewish settlement, whereas the church marks out the location of the synagogue. *Photograph by A Andrén.*

stone, commemorating the expulsion of the 'Hebrew hounds', was put on one of the houses facing the new square.[138] Jewish graveyards were often destroyed at the same time as Jewish settlements, and the gravestones were reused as building material in the cities as well as in the surroundings. One extraordinary example is Würzburg, where more than 1500 gravestones were found when a building was demolished in 1987.[139]

The reshaping of urban space after the expulsion of Jews clearly shows the complex interplay between memory and forgetting.[140] From a Christian perspective the destruction of Jewish space and Jewish gravestones were clear acts erasing the former Jewish presence, as a medieval version of *damnatio memoriae*. At the same time, however, the new churches on the sites of former synagogues and the memorial stone in Vienna were inscribed memories of the Christian triumphs; the rituals in these churches incorporated memory of the same triumphs.[141] From a Jewish perspective, the destructions of the Jewish settlements and gravestones, as well as the new Christian memorial expressions, actively excluded Jewish memory of the expulsion. However, following the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in AD 70, Jewish memory was partly based on moveable written documents as alternatives to the built environment and

[138] Mitchell 2004; Brugger 2006.
[139] Müller 2004.
[140] Connerton 1989; Williams 2006; Jones 2007.
[141] Connerton 1989, 72–89.

monuments.[142] After the expulsion of Jews from German cities, this practice was continued, and expressed in special memorial books (*Memorbücher*) commemorating the Jewish 'martyrs' who were killed during the expulsion. Such Jewish memorial books were 'inscribed memories' and record, for instance, the expulsions in Nuremberg in 1349, as well as in Vienna in 1421. However, these memories were no longer spatially connected with the places where the events took place, because the books were above all kept and reproduced among Jews that resettled in eastern Europe.[143] In that sense, the Jewish memorial books were dislocated or absent memories, in contrast to the Christian churches and memorial stones that were memories in situ.

CONCLUSION

Religious identity, and its transformation, is a fundamental concern to contemporary global societies, an increasingly visible measure of cultural resilience in multicultural settings and a challenge to the paradigm of modernity. It also questions the traditional narratives of Europe, although the concept of Christendom remains ideologically powerful in the framing of modern European identity.[144] This paper has highlighted the extent to which an archaeology of medieval religious transformations can provide a deep-time perspective for tracing the complex and shifting landscapes that characterise religious identities in the present as well as in the past. By adopting a long-term, multiscalar approach it is possible to penetrate beneath the 'singular' narratives of religious transformation that are bound up with national histories and identities. Such an approach has potential to bridge the staple of archaeological studies of religions conversion — elites and urban religious monuments — with experiential perspectives on gender, age and rural communities.

In both the Baltic and Iberia, the proliferation of new religions following conquests is markedly associated with processes of colonisation. Rather than engaging with the conquered 'other', conquering regimes appear to have focused on promoting their own populations. While the principal motive for this may have been economic, the end result was long-term cultural — and particularly religious — transformation. The comparative lens of 'hybridity and resilience', especially visible in the funerary sphere, offers a more nuanced understanding of diverse material identities linked, in part, to religious transformations. In Prussia, the process was long-term and the boundaries between pagan and orthodox practice were permeable. The Islamic conquest of Iberia resulted in similar hybridity and diversity of practice, evidenced particularly in the funerary sphere, while the later medieval Christian reconquest forced abrupt changes and the strict compartmentalisation of religious identities. The impact on conquered rural communities remains poorly understood and should be a focus for future archaeological research, although the few well-documented examples suggest widespread hybridity and resilience is to be expected, representing the limits of cultural homogenisation following military conquests. In both regions, religious change can be linked to transformations in burial rites and the use of cemeteries. Indeed, language and religion were entangled in both regions; Arabic and Islam, Latin and Christianity, Baltic or Finno-Ugric languages and indigenous spirituality, Middle Low German and Christianity. While there were cultural go-betweens and intermediaries, it is also striking how the process of religious transformation was paralleled by long-term ethno-linguistic change.

[142] Schama 2013, 375–421.
[143] Barzen 2011; Brugger 2006, 221–4.
[144] Delanty 1995.

The framework of 'tempo and trajectories' provides an important thematic prism for interrogating the mechanics of medieval religious transformations. A comparative examination of the case studies of Anglo-Saxon England, late antique Rome and late-medieval Germanic cities sheds critical new light on the rhythms and tempo of religious transformation, a prerequisite for critiquing and nuancing an understanding of 'continuity' as a central paradigm in archaeological discussions of medieval religious change.[145] By shifting attention from documented moments of conversion to longer, more attenuated processes of adaption and renegotiation, the case studies combine to delineate clear commonalities in the temporal scale and diachronic complexity of medieval religious transformation. Oscillation between long-term continuities in religious practice and faster-tempo changes, often ideologically and politically motivated, emerges as a unifying theme, whether in the rural context of 'conversion-period' England, or the urban environments of late antique or late-medieval Europe. On the other hand, there are significant differences in the treatment of memory and the past in religious transformations: the case study of late antique Rome revealed the direct continuity of ritual practices, spaces and devotional traditions, whereas at Anglo-Saxon Lyminge, the royal past was selectively reused and recycled to support the new religion. In medieval German towns, the spaces of European Jewry were deliberately erased in the active process of forgetting.

This paper has adopted a thematic, comparative approach that places Christian, Islamic and Jewish case studies of religious transformation in a cross-cultural perspective. This holistic framework has furthered understanding in several key conceptual areas as a basis for defining a future research agenda for the archaeological study of medieval religions. First, it has enabled critical insights to be drawn across a series of overlapping debates concerning the archaeological definition of the material correlates of medieval religious expression. Changing perspectives on funerary evidence represent a dominant theme in the scholarship. Archaeologists have moved to a more nuanced position in their interpretation of funerary remains and with it a rejection of the revisionist argument that burial has very little to do with religion.[146] This source of evidence is recognised as essential for furnishing a bottom-up perspective on the renegotiation of religious identities and calibrating the tempo of religious transformation as it unfolded within the majority, not just the elite sectors of society. In re-engaging with the religious dimensions of funerary behaviour, archaeologists have stressed the importance of burial as a focus for performative rituals that offer important insights into culturally-embedded concepts of cosmology and belief that articulated medieval people's place in the world.[147] Ironically, given the tendency of past debate to set religious identity in opposition to other aspects of personhood (social status, ethnicity), new perspectives on burial archaeology have started to recognise and explore how these different strands of human expression interacted and influenced one another as part of a complex layering of identities.[148] At a more macro level, there is also a renewed interest in exploring the entanglement of religious transformations with broader processes of political, social and economic change.[149]

It is much more difficult to identify common strands in the interrogation of settlement archaeology as a source of evidence for religious transformation. Religious monuments and urban environments continue to dominate discourse in many regions of Europe, although early medieval archaeologists in England and in the Scandinavian sphere are increasingly

[145] Andrén 2013.
[146] Eg Gilchrist 2008.
[147] Eg Price 2010.
[148] Eg Petts 2011.
[149] Flechner and Ní Mhaonaigh 2016.

turning to settlement archaeology to explore expressions of belief in daily life domestic contexts. Settlement archaeology is increasingly being exploited to interrogate religious transformation, but much of the work to date is geographically and temporally restricted to early medieval northern Europe, in contexts where the material correlates for ritual practices can be readily identified. In many parts of European scholarship there is a strong urban-rural divide in approaches to the study of religious transformations. The potential of urban archaeology in elucidating religious belief has not yet been fully realised, with scope for the integration of material culture and environmental perspectives (eg diet and religious lifestyle). The next stage in taking forward this agenda is to access the experience of individuals and to reflect on the relationship between gender and age with a greater emphasis on religious practice and performance.[150] In conclusion, we argue that the field requires a fundamental rethink of archaeological approaches to medieval religions. This paper represents a first step towards this aspiration.

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[150] Gilchrist 2014.

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Résumé

Transformations religieuses au Moyen-Âge : sur la voie d'un nouvel ordre du jour archéologique *par* Gabor Thomas, Aleks Pluskowski, Roberta Gilchrist, Guillermo García-Contreras Ruiz, Anders Andrén, Andrea Augenti, Grenville Astill, Jörn Staecker *et* Heiki Valk

L'interprétation de la mutation religieuse entre l'effondrement de l'empire romain et la Réformation constitue l'un des piliers de l'archéologie médiévale. Or, ce savoir a été miné par les divisions en tous genres au niveau des périodes historiques, des factions religieuses ou des frontières géographiques. Ce papier pose les fondations d'un remaniement fondamental des approches archéologiques face aux religions médiévales, en adoptant un cadre holistique qui place les études de cas chrétiennes, païennes, islamiques et juives de la transformation religieuse dans une perspective multiculturelle, à long terme. Focalisée sur deux thèmes d'analyse, « hybridisation et résilience » et « rythme et trajectoires », notre approche s'écarte des singularités des narratifs nationaux de conversion religieuse pour aboutir à une meilleure compréhension de la manière dont les populations du Moyen-Âge ont renégocié les convictions, les pratiques et l'identité religieuses dans leur vie quotidienne.

Zusammenfassung

Religiöser Wandel im Mittelalter: Zu einer neuen archäologischen Agenda *von* Gabor Thomas, Aleks Pluskowski, Roberta Gilchrist, Guillermo García-Contreras Ruiz, Anders Andrén, Andrea Augenti, Grenville Astill, Jörn Staecker *und* Heiki Valk

Einer der Eckpfeiler der Mittelalterarchäologie ist die Bemühung, den religiösen Wandel zwischen dem Zusammenbruch des römischen Reiches und der Reformation zu verstehen. Aber dieses Verständnis ist stark unterschiedlich, je nach Ära, Konfession oder geographische Verortung. Der vorliegende Artikel legt das Fundament für ein grundlegendes Umdenken im archäologischen Ansatz bei mittelalterlichen Religionen, indem er einen holistischen Rahmen definiert, in dem christliche, heidnische, islamische und jüdische Fallstudien religiösen Wandels in langfristiger, kulturübergreifender Perspektive gesehen werden. Mit Schwerpunkt auf den analytischen Themen "Hybridität und Resilienz" und "Geschwindigkeit und Entwicklungsbahnen" verschiebt unser Ansatz die Aufmerksamkeit weg von den nationalen Narrativen religiöser Bekehrung und hin zu einem tieferen Verständnis dafür, wie religiöse Überzeugung, Praxis und Identität von den Menschen des Mittelalters in ihrem alltäglichen Leben neu verhandelt wurden.

Riassunto

Le trasformazioni religiose nel Medioevo: verso un nuovo indirizzo archeologico
di Gabor Thomas, Aleks Pluskowski, Roberta Gilchrist, Guillermo García-Contreras Ruiz, Anders Andrén, Andrea Augenti, Grenville Astill, Jörn Staecker *e* Heiki Valk

La comprensione delle trasformazioni religiose avvenute tra la caduta dell'Impero Romano e la Riforma costituisce uno dei pilastri dell'archeologia medievale, ma è stata lacerata da divisioni rispetto a periodi, denominazioni e posizioni geografiche. Questo studio getta le basi per un ripensamento fondamentale degli approcci archeologici alle religioni medievali mediante uno schema olistico che pone esempi cristiani, pagani, islamici ed ebrei di trasformazione religiosa in una prospettiva interculturale a lungo termine. Concentrandosi sui temi analitici di 'ibridità e resilienza'e di 'tempi e traiettorie' il nostro approccio sposta l'attenzione dalle particolarità delle narrative nazionali inerenti alle conversioni religiose a una comprensione più profonda del modo in cui le credenze, le pratiche e le identità religiose vennero rinegoziate dai popoli medievali nel corso della vita quotidiana.